



MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES
Maryland's Social Services Agency



PRESS RELEASE

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**DHR's HOME ENERGY PROGRAM PROJECTS SERVING 115,000 DURING
2009 PROGRAM YEAR**

BALTIMORE – The Maryland Department of Human Resources announced record-breaking numbers of people served through its Maryland Energy Assistance Program (MEAP). The Maryland Energy Assistance Program provides assistance with home heating bills.

The program started accepting applications July 1, 2008, and will cease May 31, 2009. By the end of the 2009 program year, more than 144,000 households will have applied for energy assistance. For the previous program year (2008), 128,168 households applied.

As of April, 108,000 households were eligible for assistance and received an average grant of \$564. Compared to the same time period last year, this is an increase of 16,000 more households.

To prepare for the 2010 program year, the Department will conduct two public hearings to garner public comment on its proposed state operational plan. The state plan outlines strategies to provide services to assist citizens to meet their increasing energy cost. The proposed annual state plan is available for review on www.dhr.state.md.us/meap. Recommendations will be considered in developing the final program plan.

Two public hearings are scheduled, one on June 2, 2009 in Talbot County and the other on June 3, 2009 in Baltimore City. All are encouraged to participate in the public hearing process. The public hearing schedule is as follows:

TALBOT COUNTY

June 2, 2009 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Talbot County Neighborhood Service Center
126 Port Street
Conference Room
Easton, MD 21601
Contact: Cardeaner Robinson
410-763-6745

- Martin O'Malley, Governor
- Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor
- Brenda Donald, Secretary

BALTIMORE CITY

June 3, 2009 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development

2700 N. Charles Street, 2nd Floor Conference room

Baltimore MD 21218

Contact: Cherlyn Mitchell

410- 396-3584

If participants can not attend the public hearing, the Department will accept written comments. Send written comments to Ralph Markus, Director of the Office of Home Energy Programs at 311 West Saratoga Street, Room 239, Baltimore, Maryland 21201-3521. The deadline for receiving written comments is June 10, 2009.

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The Maryland Department of Human Resources is the state's social service provider. The agency collaborates with 24 local jurisdictions to: provide foster care, adoption and protective services to children; collect and distribute child support payments; and provide temporary cash, food stamps and medical assistance to families. It also funds programs for homeless persons, refugees, migrant workers, victims of crime and women who are displaced, battered or assaulted. Last year, DHR served 638,000 people in need. In terms of its annual budget, DHR is Maryland's fourth largest state agency.